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EUPHEMIAN SOCIETY

OF

CLARK AND ERSKINE SEMINARY,
ABBEVILLE, So. Ca.

AT ITS

THIRD ANNIVERSARY:

September, 21, 1842.

BY

W. A. SMITH, M. D.

—X—

ANDERSON, S. C.

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1842.

EUPHEMIAN HALL, C. & E. SEMINARY, }
SEPTEMBER, 21st, 1842.

SIR:—We, the undersigned Committee, acting as the organ of the Euphemian Society, announce the high approbation with which your able, appropriate, and eloquent address was received; and tender you our sincere thanks for the same, with an earnest request that you would place in our hands a copy for publication.

Very Respectfully,

D. P. ROBINSON,
D. McCRERY,
J. P. WEED.

To Dr. W. A. SMITH,

ABBEVILLE DIST., September 21st 1842.

GENTLEMEN:—I accede to your request, though with some degree of reluctance, arising from the fact, that the address to which your note of this evening alludes in a complimentary manner, was hastily prepared during the pressure of business, and I fear altogether undeserving of the interest and merit with which your partialities have invested it.

Accept, Gentlemen, the best assurance of my high regard for your Society, as well as your own individual welfare.

I am with great Respect,

Your obedient Servant,

W. A. SMITH.

To Messrs. D. P. ROBINSON,
D. McCRERY,
J. P. WEED,

Committee of Euphemian Society.

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ADDRESS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

After a long exposure to the relaxing influence of a summer's sun, in the official discharge of arduous professional duties, I feel but illy qualified to represent the promising Society which has honored me with a call to the station I now occupy. My thoughts and actions have necessarily been directed to a very different sphere—and although I highly appreciate the cause which thus signalizes me in the public eye, I cannot but feel the peculiar embarrassments arising from inexperience, and from want of time for due preparation. The wailful cry, and sympathetic tear that haunt the couch of affliction, spreading cold melancholy around every heart—chilling every budding prospect, and obscuring every ray of hope, would appear more natural and familiar to me than the literary feast of the present moment; where the mind, full of lively imagination, leaves the great ocean of business and care, to recall associations of by-gone days, and sport again in the flowery meads of early existence.

On occasions of this kind, where halls of science have been thrown open, and their mysteries and beauties unfolded to the public gaze by youthful intellects, we are naturally led to contemplate man, at least the literary character in every stage of his existence. We view him in mental twilight, the object of parental tenderness and solicitude, perhaps the subject of many flattering remarks from friends and observers. But while the parents are elated with the gratifying allusions made to their son, the child himself regardless of eulogy, indulges in innocent sports along the shore of life's tempestuous sea, unconscious that billows of care and trouble rise and swell, and roll along, either to break harmless at his feet, or to overwhelm him with ruin and disaster.

After the days of mere childhood are past, the lovely youth is introduced into the primary school, and makes some proficiency in acquiring the rudiments of an English education. We next arrive at the "grove of Academus," where Virgil still sings of shepherds tending their flocks upon the wild mountains of his native land, and Homer eulogises the daring spirit and inventive genius of the proud Greeks who rescued Beauty from her prison house within the walls of Troy. It is at this stage of education that the powers of the mind begin to develope; it is then that the scintillations of genius begin to be evolved—and that the occasional coruscations of intellect afford encouraging evidence of future greatness and celebrity. Here too, in this season of mental developement, it sometimes happens that he who was in childhood the son of promise, the pride and hope of fond parents, is found to be the dolt of the Academy, and to possess a mind better adapted to the latitude of the carter than to the

meridian of Literature and Science. Leaving the Academy we reach the College Hall where the finishing touch is received; where science like the sun in his meridian grandeur pours a rich gleam of dazzling light on every thing around. By this light the diligent student is prepared in due time to enter the arena of political strife, and conduct the stormy debate; or as Pastor, Physician, or Philosopher, to exercise himself in averting or alleviating the ills of man's present or future existence.

Although in this retrospection we may observe many a wasted moment, which if rightly improved might have advanced us another link in the great chain of knowledge; yet it is mostly full of agreeable thoughts which the mind reluctantly gives up. But when we turn from the period of Academic and Collegiate life (a period comparatively free from care and anxiety) and look along the meridian of life to the days of ripened manhood, or hoary old age, how changed is the scene! Cares, like huge mountains rise before the mind, and extend far around us—multitudes are seen to enter the field of action and spend their energies, either in promoting the general good, or in seeking their own aggrandizement.—Thousands crowd along the pathway to the Temple of Fame, and a few by dint of perseverance, or from superior talent and address enter with exultation her time-honored walls. He who would gain distinction in either of the learned professions, or in any department of knowledge whatever in our day, must be possessed of at least a certain amount of genius, and have the organ of application strongly developed. Blind chance on her wheel no longer deals out liberal shares of fortune and fame to all who merely ask, but leaves them to be won by those possessed of genius and erudition in the field of competition. If then education or its results, *knowledge*, be power—if it give to its possessor a commanding influence in society—if it enable him to promote the best interests of the human species, and to sustain with philosophic firmness the many ills to which man is subject—let us strive for the golden acquisition, for now is the day when all its energies and agencies are most urgently demanded.

Permit me on this occasion to call your attention to some observations on the facilities enjoyed in our day of acquiring knowledge—on the benefits resulting from a correct education, together with some remarks on the course of instruction now pursued—its faults and efficiency.

When we contrast the present with former ages we discover at a glance the superior advantages which are now enjoyed, not only in acquiring the rudiments of an education, but in securing all that is refining in literature, or profound in science. The Greeks and Romans had their primary schools and their Academian Bowers, but the facilities for acquiring knowledge in these seats of learning must have been limited indeed, compared with the advantages generally enjoyed in such institutions in our own day. They were under the necessity of preparing their books with the stylus or pen on parchment or papyrus, and of course their number and variety must have been very limited, contrasted with the rich variety and abundant supply which is now afforded, by the invention of paper and the press, to the countless number of schools of every grade, from the infant institution up to the magnificent and well endowed University. Had it not been for these inventions, and the stimulus to

effort which they have excited and aroused, and the happy consequences resulting from that effort, how far would education be this day, in advance of what it was in the days of Augustus Caesar? How many of those works on philosophy, morals and mathematics, which enrich and adorn so many public and private libraries, and are found, in all our institutions, from the common school to the College how many of them would have been prepared at all, or the topics on which they treat investigated, had their authors been assured that every book, and every succeeding edition of their respective works must be written out in fair legible characters by the slow moving pen? And if such works were wanting what an obstacle would be presented to the advancement and general diffusion of knowledge!

Every age is distinguished by some peculiar feature or characteristic. From the sixth to the fifteenth century is a period denominated on the historic page as the *Dark ages*, and the present may be truly termed an age of *light* when contrasted with such gloominess. No period will compare with the present as to the general diffusion of knowledge. We find at a particular epoch in the history of Greece & Rome, that those nations could boast of philosophers, orators, historians, and poets—Geni and Giants in intellect, many of whom enjoyed a pre-eminence among their countrymen in learning and philosophy, but like scarce and widely distant luminaries, they shone with the brilliancy of planets, while millions of obscure stars remained altogether unnoticed. Science and literature were with them cultivated by a few only, compared with the great mass of their population—and even those few, though they culminated high in the firmament of knowledge, as knowledge then existed, yet as to extent, correctness and depth of knowledge, they bear no comparison to the learned and distinguished characters of Europe and America.

And why was the mass of the people of those far-famed nations so ignorant & superstitious? Why were their philosophers and sages so far behind in correct profound and useful knowledge the same class of men at the present day? The answer is they, lacked the facilities that we enjoy. They possessed minds as bold, searching and energetic as any of this age, but they lacked the printing-press, the books, the chemical, astronomical, and philosophic apparatus, which endow and embellish all our higher institutions.

But passing from Greece and Rome, what, we ask, was the state of Education during the middle ages? Deplorable indeed! The black cape of a starless night hung over the land! An extinguisher was placed upon every mental effort; and for a mind to force its fetters—to think independantly and communicate its thoughts to the world, was a crime of no small magnitude. And even after the darkness of this dismal night of ages was dispelled, and a fair Aurora had begun to dawn upon the world, the rich blessings of education were still tasted only by a few favored individuals, who formed a class of society peculiar to themselves, distinct from every other class, and only came down among the people when they chose to storm the public mind, and wield it in purposes of their own choice. This state of things continued too, long after the public taste had become thirsty for general knowledge, and for a more

rational arrangement of society. But for the want of public Seminaries of learning well endowed and conducted by learned and competent teachers, many a mind whose genius under a proper culture, might have shed a ray of light across the world, was doomed to imbecility—left without the benefit of instruction, to grope its way in midnight darkness or to feast upon the legends and pitiful sophistry of some dreaming enthusiast. A few universities existed on the continent of Europe previously to the Reformation, but they were poorly endowed, and most generally conducted by a single teacher—rather nurseries of ignorance and superstition than schools of learning and knowledge.

How many great minds think you—how many Bacons, Boyles, Lockes, and Newtons were lost to the world in those days, from the want of being placed in favorable circumstances and enjoying proper advantages?

But now the scene is changed—education is abroad in the land, and wherever she erects her temples, there virtue, learning, and knowledge hold perpetual dominion. Who does not perceive the benefits arising from such institutions? A spirit of general enquiry is excited in the neighborhood where they are located—minds are brought into contact—opinions and principles discussed, and as knives sharpen each other by friction, so this collision of mind gives edge and acuteness to the intellectual faculties.

The tree of knowledge is no longer cultivated in garden spots as though it were an exotic, but springs up spontaneously, both in the field and in the forest, extending its richly laden boughs in every direction, inviting all to partake of its golden fruits.

The present system of thorough and extensive education affords us a rational means of accounting correctly for the apparent vanishing of the “Augustan age of England;” not that knowledge has deteriorated by a more general cultivation, or that men are less enlightened now than they were then—but from the fact that the “pigmies have sprung up into men, and the giants no longer appear of colossal stature by comparison.” All that rich store of learning and knowledge which at one period appeared to be monopolised by a Hume, Robertson, Lock, Newton, and a Johnson and their compeers, has by the easy and abundant means of securing instruction been communicated to the mind of myriads of others, and all that Gibbon tells of the “decline and fall” of a mighty Empire, which cost him so much labor and research, may now be commanded in a short time by the diligent student.

The *benefits* resulting from a thorough Education are too numerous to be generally pointed out in the course of a short address. As knowledge is diffusible its blessings are not confined merely to those whose minds have been cultivated, but like light and caloric it diffuses itself throughout all the ramifications of society, warming and cheering more or less, even those who have never tasted for themselves.

It is only those however who have frequented the Halls of science, & whose minds have undergone a thorough schooling, that are able to appreciate fully the advantages arising from a well cultivated intellect. Among other benefits arising from the attainment of knowledge, there is an inward secret gratification arising from the mere fact of *knowing*—an inex-

pressible emotion of pleasure with which the ignorant and illiterate do not intermeddle. But whilst this is one of the blessings of education not to be contemned, it is to the benevolent mind one of scarcely secondary importance compared with the facility and efficiency with which education enables him on a large scale to promote the happiness of his fellow-creatures. The pleasurable emotions which arise in the mind of a kind and sympathetic man, whether preacher, physician, or lawyer, from the acquisition of knowledge, is a very small advantage in comparison with the ability which that knowledge affords him in healing the mental or physical wounds of his fellow man, or of holding the scales of justice between man and man, and defending the cause of injured innocence. And further :

When Education is thorough—when proper principles have been inculcated it gives to the energetic mind a commanding influence in society—it equalizes rank by placing the man of letters, though in indigent circumstances, upon an equality, if not far above the ignorant, though lordly possessor of large estates.

It is to the progress of education, and to the universal inculcation of correct principles that we are to hope for the continuance of our glorious Republic, and for the preservation of all those privileges civil, social, and domestic that we this day enjoy. It is chiefly by this means that we are to keep in due subordination the redundant and ignorant population of Europe, which is now pouring in upon us with such fearful rapidity—it is by this that we are to stem that spirit of *mobocracy* which is now so rife in the land, and so disgraceful to the nation. It is by this means that we are to hope for the complete emancipation of the human mind from all those superstitious, persecuting and intolerant opinions and practices which have long proved so detrimental to human happiness. Much has already been accomplished in this respect by the progress of education. Read the records of the past and you will find much occasion to rejoice in this onward march of intellect. No sacrificial offering of human souls are now made in this enlightened land for the purpose of appeasing the anger of imaginary Gods! No martyrs are now brought to the stake for the advocacy of truth and virtue—nor the sentence of death longer passed and executed upon those who choose to practice themselves and instill into the minds of others, wisdom, piety and moderation. But in the peaceful quiet of our temples all gladly meet to offer up their devotions to the one only living and true God—and that which was thought by the ancients in Socrates as deserving the poisonous extract of hemlock, is every where cherished; and finds a habitation and ardent lovers, not in the grove on the banks of the Illyssus, but in numerous well-endowed, commodious edifices, like the proud Seminary that towers yonder, still under the hands of the Architect, and destined to last for ages, shedding its benign and illuminating influence on the present and succeeding generations.

Mere professional titles are not now as they once were, sufficient to confer distinction upon all those who are able to purchase them, but such distinctive appellations are appreciated and rightly, too, in proportion to the amount of the ingredient knowledge which they are found to represent. Hypothesis and wild speculation are no longer tolerated

in science, but as utility is the spirit of the age, the philosopher in searching after knowledge feels constrained to confine himself within the sober limits of truth. Quackery and vain presumption, the boasted vesture of a pigmy, no longer dazzle, but the pretensions of the mountebank are every where called in question, thus shewing the advantages arising from the general diffusion of knowledge and independant thought.

It is not sufficient that we possess genius alone, for genius uneducated often runs wild, and deals in explosive compounds, which result in its own destruction. Self-taught men or such as have arrived at distinction for literary attainments, without having undergone the formal discipline of Academies and Colleges are not examples disproving the benefits of Education, for if we study the history of such men we will ever find that they have learned by a life of hard experience in the great school of the world, what we learn in the shady retreats of our seminaries and Colléges. He who relies upon native talents and fortuitous circumstances to effect for him what education effects for others, will find out his mistake perhaps too late, when the withering touch of age has paralyzed the powers of his mind.

The general course of instruction now pursued, its faults and its efficiency is a theme worthy of more extended remarks. If education be what it is generally conceded to be—the aliment of the human mind—how careful then should we be to see that it consists of nothing but what is altogether salutary in its nature.

That part of education which should be the most perfect, is as it ever has been still the most deficient. This in a good degree is the fault of the teacher and his employers, and arises from an inadequate conception of the object in view. If the talents and acquisitions demanded on the part of instructors, and the reciprocal co-operation necessary on the part of parents and teachers—if these things were rightly understood the murmurings and bickerings that are often heard about slow progress and rigid discipline would be hushed—men of ordinary capacities and sluggish habits would no longer be found at the head of our primary schools—studying rather to please the peculiar whims of the parents and guardians than to lay in strength that mental foundation, upon the superstructure of which depends so much the wisdom, skill, and ability of those who shall hereafter be called to regulate the movements of this mighty Republic. Were the Physician in his treatment of children to suffer his discriminating judgement to become influenced by the tears and tender sympathies of Parents; and the Architect to fail in executing strong and secure the foundation of his building, how often would the cold lifeless tenement of a departed infant spirit convince the one, and a crumbling edifice the other, of falsity and abuse of the high confidence respectively reposed in their wisdom and integrity. Be careful in the first place to select men qualified for the business of teaching, and to them submit the education of your children.

Every man of intelligence who has reflected at all on the organization of schools and the character of the youthful mind—its capacity for receiving instruction must have observed a great deficiency in the plan of education as pursued in our elementary schools. This department is in many instances entrusted to persons who possess little or no qualifica-

tions whatever for the business of teaching—often to men whose acquirements are so ordinary & whose habits are so indolent that they cannot obtain employment in any other business. Thus the powerful elements of mind are suffered to be treated by one ignorant of their virtues, who instead of arranging & combining them in such a manner as to secure their fullest efficiency, often neutralises and renders them less effectual than they were at first.

To remedy then this evil in the education of youth, let a thorough system of elementary instruction be adopted, and schools established in every neighborhood where the density of the population is sufficient to sustain them; and men employed to superintend them who are qualified for the station both as to temper and ability—who understand rightly how to apply the fuel, and fan into a blaze the latent sparks of Genius in the minds of youth—who control the passions—subdue and lead the lion-like spirit, as well as caress into confidence the timid lamb.

How painful to reflect that whilst in the vigor of youth when the mind was fresh, elastic, and free from the restraints of care, we then contracted from the ignorance of teachers a hatred to books, which has followed us up through life, and been the cause of many unhappy sensations. Youth is the proper season for impressions—sow then what you would reap hereafter; for when once this spring-tide of life is over, no season again will be found so useful.

Whilst it is altogether desirable that a good foundation be laid in our primary schools, it is also highly important and necessary that in our high schools and Colleges a noble superstructure should be reared on this solid and substantial basis. This desirable object can be accomplished only by an enlarged & correct course of Collegiate instruction.

The common course of Education pursued in our Colleges consists in the study of “classics and mathematics,” or in a more comprehensive sense, of Literature and Science. These are both essential, and a good education consists in a just proportion of the two. I am however disposed to conclude, that much time is often consumed in attending to the former, to the great neglect of the latter. The one ripens the mind and fits us for the social intercourse of polished society, whilst the other establishes and fortifies the judgement, and qualifies us for the more active duties of business life. Science is of much more practical utility in all the business affairs of life, and proficiency in this department should ever be the criterion guiding the faculty in determining the awards of honor to the student.

It is not my purpose to condemn literature, but to encourage a more general taste for the cultivation of Science. Literature that well springs of life—that pure fountain of Pierian water, which once tasted increases so much a renewed relish for its invigorating draughts, is too salutary in its influence to be condemned—It is to the mind after the solution of dry geometrical problems, what the cool retreat of the grove is to the weary traveler of a hot summer day—reviving, and productive of the liveliest hope of a more pleasing journey.

I cannot think of prescribing limits to any particular branch of study, or of determining the amount of knowledge necessary to be acquired during the course of Education. This would be a species of presumption which never fails to reflect discredit upon one so humble.

Let our Colleges throw open every variety of instruction, and if possible infuse into the mind of the student universal knowledge.—But should it ever be found necessary to divide the proportions between Literature and Science, let the preference be given always to the latter. Vegetation is every where refreshed and invigorated by the cool shades of the evening, but without the return of light and heat it would languish and decay. So the mind is refreshed by promenading the shady retreats of Literature, but without the fostering influence of the sun of Science, judgement and reason, the better faculties, would soon become enervated and eventually sink into insignificance.

Mark the steady, noiseless, powerful and onward march of Science—exploring every continent and Ocean for the purpose of making new discoveries—of deriving new comforts, and of promoting the health, wealth, and happiness of man; marking out the course of the Rail way and Canal—scaling the loftiest mountains with its train of freighted cars—stealing softly along the canal with its unpretending vessel, richly laden with the productions of the soil—or dashing with dizzy rapidity over the waves of the Atlantic in its more ostentatious steamer crowded with the ever moving mass of beauty, gayety, and wealth—at one time soaring away to the heavens, holding converse with the planets, calculating their distances, examining their changed and mysterious operations—and at another descending to earth, instructing the miner how and where to find the precious metals—giving lessons to the farmer on soils and productions—aiding the manufacturer in the arrangement and harmonious operation of his millions of spindles—inventing gun-powder, and an improved type, by which the physical powers of man are equalized, knowledge diffused throughout every ramification of society, and the fair temples of learning and liberty forever secured against the merciless ravages of another Goth-vandalic horde—holding up the elements of which every material substance is composed, and combining them again in a different way for the purpose of restoring health to the afflicted, and of facilitating Art in all her dispensations of blessings to man—explaining the mysterious causes which produce the varied seasons, the commotions of atmosphere and water, as well as every dun skirt of cloud that floats upon a summer's breeze.

Literature may boast of her sublime sentiment and refined taste, her minstrels and gay troubadours whose charming songs too often persuade us out in a frail barque upon a political sea, blind to the beacon that points to the harbor of safety in a storm—but Science sails in a wreckless boat, and gives us eyes by which we may penetrate and push our observations to every point of the compass, and find the homeward track upon the broad bosom of the pathless deep—Science then is knowledge, and knowledge is truly power.

The propriety of continuing the study of the Latin and Greek Classics in the common course of University education has of late called forth such a flood of conflicting opinions that I feel a delicacy in offering any specific remarks upon this part of my subject. Though the learned differ on the subject there is still a strong majority in favor of their continuance. And when we reflect that much of our own language is derived from these ancient dialects, we should be disposed to coincide with the

popular sentiment. Besides the systematic training and intellectual development, which result from the protracted mental efforts requisite in obtaining a thorough knowledge of these languages, they are highly advantageous if not absolutely essential at present on the part of every one who desires to occupy a prominent place in either of the learned professions. Without such a knowledge, the technical terms which are now employed in these professions cannot be readily comprehended; nor can even the commoner sciences be taught to advantage in our institutions, for they too are principally built up of terms derived from these languages. Take for example chemical nomenclature. Here the amount of the combining proportion of every element that unites with a base in the formation of chemical compounds, is specifically expressed by prefixing a Latin or Greek abbreviation, which swells the term but little, and gives us at once a just apprehension of the virtues of the compound. If then we do not understand the meaning of the original term for which these abbreviations are substituted, we are thrown upon the resources of memory and the recollection of numerous, and to us unmeaning definitions, which bewilder and retard the progress of the student, and the practical operator in his scientific researches. Surely the time would be well spent in acquiring that which would relieve the *sensorium commune* from such oppressive taxation. Again, Oxygen, a term signifying the most common element in nature, affords no idea of the chemical properties of that element, but by reverting to its origin in the Greek language we have at once the sole acidifying principle. So with every other term of similar origin. Law, Medicine, and Divinity are full of such terms, and he who attempts to master them without knowing their derivations will find himself traveling over rough ground with a heavily taxed memory; while on the other hand the classical scholar derives them with ease, and passes on smoothly with a memory enriched, lively and free from all taxation whatever.

But whilst it is highly important to study the ancient languages, from which our own is in a good degree derived, we should by no means neglect to form a thorough acquaintance with our own native tongue. When we consider the great diversity of our origin as well as the varied productions of our soil, bringing us into social and commercial intercourse with every other nation, we may perhaps be led to conclude that the study of foreign literature and language is more essential to us than to any other people. And while I grant that there seems to be some plausibility in this, I cannot however forget what is due the nation. Every free and enlightened nation possesses a literature, and to some extent a language peculiar to itself, & upon the degree of cultivation to which these are advanced, depends the distinction and in a great measure the superiority of one particular nation over that of another. I hold it a sacred obligation on the part of every one professing any pretensions whatever to scholarship, that he not only understand the literature of his own country, but that he should be able also to speak and write his own language in its most improved style, and manifest a preference for it on all occasions both in writing and speaking for without such a course no degree of intellectual refinement can become truly national in character. So long as England and France continued to be the ser-

vile imitators of each other, they were stationary and made no advancement towards their present literary character. The same was also true at one time of Germany when the rage for Latin authors and other writers, led her to neglect the improvement of her own strong and impressive Language. Thus the public mind was left without a guiding rule to catch at whatever dazzled, or to float to and fro, like a ship at sea without compass or anchor. But when these nations become more national: when they look to their own resources and direct their attention to the cultivation of their own literature and language they soon establish a literary character worthy of all admiration, and one too which has obtained for them universal distinction. So may this nation when we once learn to appreciate properly our own character and resources, and look at home and not abroad for themes and examples of greatness worthy of our pens and patronage.

Let us give to the others all they justly merit, but ever hold sacred that which is due to ourselves. We should study and improve our own literature and language, with the view of establishing our literary character as a nation. This has been done to some extent but by far too much neglected. Some foreign tourists allow us just so much distinction as our hospitality and generosity will purchase; but when they come to make out the list of nations distinguished for high literary attainments our hospitality avails us nothing. Why is this? Is the climate insalubrious to the luxurious growth, and mature developement of the intellectual faculties? I grant that mind may be withered by the scorching influence of a torrid sun, or chilled and stunned in its growth upon the frigid shores of Zeland;—but ours is a temperate zone. And in addition to the favorable position in which we are placed in respect to climate as a nation we can boast of a great and renowned ancestry, which consideration should stimulate us to excel in literature, as well as every thing else that is useful, glorious and great. Washington, Jefferson, Franklin and a host of worthies, who gave birth to this Republic—who guided the councils of the nation—who stood firm and erect like giants refreshed by sleep, encountered and repulsed upon the bloody field the formidable foe in that dark hour which tried men's souls—these are our national ancestors, our political fathers, and their names and achievements should have done as much to establish the literary as the heroic character of the nation. A Homer or a Virgil would have depicted not the fictitious but the real character and achievements of such an ancestry, in poetic strains so glowing eloquent and sublime as to have established forever the literary character of these United States.

Does our country then afford no themes sufficient to develope and command the genius of her sons, and call forth from them literary productions of such a high order as to preclude the necessity of depending so entirely for such works upon foreign authors? The deeds of noble daring which those brave spirits accomplished, who rushed forth to the rescue of Liberty, when the murky cloud of war was gathered thick and storming heavily every where around them—the character and conduct of those ruthless savages who once prowled through our forests, with their tommy hawks and scalping knives, driving terror into every heart, and plundering the houses of bearded mothers and children—The pres-

ent character and genius of the nation, her institutions, politics, diplomacy & improvements; together with the stupendous scenery that every where presents itself :—all these afford themes on which works of high literary merit might be written. But how many or, rather how few standard works of lasting merit have been prepared on any of these subjects? We have written the history of the Revolution, and recorded the principal rencountres in which our ancestors were exposed during the Indian warfare, & shall this be considered sufficient to impress upon the minds of posterity a sense of their greatness?

National recollections and national feelings are too much neglected by us: these have been altogether abandoned or thrown aside to breathe a confined existence in the commonest circles of life. It is not sufficient that we have eulogised the greatness and written the history of our fathers once—this should be done again and again by the tongue of a Demosthenes, and the pens of a Livy and Tacitus—done in the most glowing, eloquent and captivating style, so that all classes of society would gladly lend an attentive ear and be led to peruse them with that eagerness and deep anxiety, with which the lover of romance poms over the fanciful but pernicious efforts of a Bulwer.

Such sentiments and works would beget in the people a love of themselves, upon which depends so much the intellectual superiority of the nation. It is necessary that we feel sensible of the greatness of our deeds and actions before we can expect that the minds of others will become much influenced in our favor: for one nation is often elevated in the eyes of another by the same circumstances which exalt it in its own.

There is nothing so effectual in giving self confidence to a people as the fact of knowing and feeling that they are possessed of a renowned ancestry—that they have been great in former ages. Let them once realize fully that they have been nursed in the lap of greatness themselves and they will not be so eager to catch at the baubles, and applaud the little acts and achievements of others.

The Greeks and Romans always found it important to keep before the eyes of their countrymen a renowned ancestry. This was the great object of the writings of Homer. He held up to the Greeks an ancestry renowned for every virtue—prepared alike to undergo with patience every hardship of war or to engage with boldness in the fierce conflicts of the arena, and carry off the palm. These in that rude age were merely stimulents to martial pursuits but in after years they exercised a strong influence in refining the feelings and manners of the people, and of exciting them to like deeds of boldness in the pursuit and cultivation of literature. Again in the dark ages of the world, when the ruthless hand of a northern foe had sacked their libraries, and deprived them of every trace of record which reflected light upon their former greatness, they relaxed in their energies and sunk down in apathy around the mouldering columns of their fallen temples.

The fact that ours is a literature and language derived in part from other nations is no just reason why we should not attempt vigorously to augment and improve upon this imported capital. Greece derived her alphabet from the Phœnecians, as well as many fragments of art and science from the Egyptians, but she improved these advantages and es-

established a literary character, and one too that still lives fresh and green in the memory of posterity. Rome likewise derived all her early literature from the Greeks, and she too transmits to posterity the evidences of her literary greatness. And as we enjoy advantages far superior to those enjoyed by these distinguished nations, so we should and could establish for ourselves a high literary character, if we would once throw off this servile dependance upon others and become properly impressed with a true sense of our own superior talents and resources.

We cannot now plead that we are in a state of minority, for as a distinct people we must date our origin from the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth rock, and consequently we are now in the vigor of manhood, and without a change of age will find us in the same position we now occupy as regards literary distinction; for nations like men have their season of youth, manhood and decay.

In support of the correctness of the remarks respecting our fondness for foreign literature, I might appeal to the fact that there is a strong predilection felt every where for the works of trans-Atlantic authors—there is a feeling of adoration or of homage cherished and manifested towards such authors, especially poets and novelists, that is not felt in behalf of the writings of native Americans. Should a Bulwer or a “Boz” visit this country they would be cheered with the loudest laudations and excite the deepest attention, while our own authors would be allowed to pass on in silence.

The higher classes of fashionable society, from whom the nation should expect the most do less perhaps to promote its interests than any other class. Every thing is sacrificed to fashion which must be built upon a foreign plan. The English novel has accumulated until it has crowded from our libraries many productions of our own country of far higher value,—works rich in thought and conservative in influence, and the urbane Frenchman has in many instances usurped the place of the noble generous American. And how can a nation with all these opposing circumstances clustering around it expect to establish its national literary character? As well might we attempt to chain the Hellespont, or hurl back the torrent of the Missouri to its far distant source in the Rocky Mountains.

We should remember in our lavish of unmerited praise upon the foreign authors of these fictitious productions, that it is paramount in their eye to a tacit acknowledgement of inability on our part to accomplish the same; and although this would not reflect much discredit upon us, yet I am disposed to think that any man of a well cultivated mind and strong imagination might in the quietude of his closet pick up his pen and magnify characters and scenery to such a degree as to give them altogether a novel aspect.

The grace and true refinement of fashionable society should be approved & admired but much of the nutriment upon which it subsists, consists of this trashy character which should be abhorred, for it has often the evil effect of diverting the mind from more useful pursuits. Why are such things so eagerly perused. Are there not scenes enough in real life to move the sympathies of the stoutest heart, or awaken the dullest sensibility into the liveliest admiration of beauty and grandeur, without the magnifying

influence of these fine spun, flimsy, paltry foreign Romances, by which "the spirit of the age is tossed hither and thither, not without great and frequent danger of entirely losing sight of the compass of meditation, and the polar star of truth?" Read the history of our own country, see the narrow escapes of some of our own fathers, while others are falling under the mangled wounds of an hundred tommy hawks. Go into the indigent circles of life, and there too my experience tells me may be found many an object for sympathy upon which to shed your redundant tears, and a benignant Heaven will bless you. Look round upon all nature—see the rich variety she every where presents—go forth into the field, or in the forest and while you admire the beautiful flowers that cluster in rich variety at every step, mark the sweet melody of a thousand woodland songsters, gushing in lavish waste upon every breeze. Enter the dark caves of the earth "where the wolf howls all day long, and the sun never shines," and with lighted taper observe the sublimity of the surrounding scenery, here a pillar, and there a thorough fare---here a Gothic arch & there a marble centre---here a small cascade roaring on the ear with the noise of subterranean thunder—and there in the cleft rock the petrified remains of a race whose existence the extinguishing influence of time has long since terminated—or on climbing the mountain's rugged brow take your stand on some lofty peak, and survey the beautiful scenery below—the undulating plain, the meandering stream, the waving forest, or the neat little farm house with its fields of living green on every side—or from the same lofty eminence, with telescope in hand sweep over the starry-decked Heavens of a clear still moonless night, and if wildness, beauty, greatness or grandeur of scenery be any plea for novel reading, here may be found a substantial, answering every rational demand.

In order then that this nation may become distinguished for high literary attainments, let the foundation of such distinction be laid broad and firm in our schools and Colleges. Let the idea be indelibly impressed upon the mind of every pupil, that as we are superior in many branches of art, and are possessed of inexhaustable resources and an untiring zeal, so we may surpass every other nation in literature and science. Let the student be taught to prize the productions of American authors and to believe that with our privileges, resources and high incentives to action, we may by proper application excel in poetry, philosophy, history, and in every other department of literature the distinguished authors of Europe. Especially let the attention be turned from the fictitious works to which allusion has been made, and directed to those high scientific investigations, which should ever constitute the main point in every well arranged course of study.

The people of the United States should be the last to indulge in fiction, inhabiting as we do an extensive domain, stretching from Maine to Texas, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific—including every variety of soil and climate and adapted to the culture of every species of production,—a country adorned.

"With hill, and dale, and lawn and winding vale,"

"Woodland and stream, and lake, and rolling seas,"

"Green mead, and fruitful tree, and fertile grain,"

"And herb and flower,"

"With numerous beasts of every kind, with fowl"

"Of every wing and every tuneful note.—

Every thing around above and beneath invites us to indulge, not in fiction but in the contemplation of facts, not in dreamy reveries, not in conjuring up.

"Gorgons, Hydras, and Chimeras dire," to frighten the weak, & paralyze the youthful mind, but our whole country with its minerals & metals, its fruits & flowers invites the mind to the study of the sciences, the most useful and important study that can engage the attention of man.

In every well-directed education the great object should be to secure a thorough knowledge of the sciences—particularly the *natural sciences* when these have been once properly comprehended, the mind may safely sport upon the wings of fancy, with the Poet and Novelist in their element of thought, or wander among the fairy and fictitious scenes of heathen mythology, sober judgement disciplined and strengthened by exercise, returns it untarnished to the home of realities, and analyzes its varied flights by the truths of induction.

The great incentive to the study of the natural sciences is the love of nature. And who is so insensible to impressions of beauty and grandeur as not to admire nature? Who is not enraptured when he contemplates the greatness, the variety, and profusion in which she sports? Alpine mountains rise in majestic ranges, one above the other until they mingle with the clouds— their sides studded over with huge trees and their summits crowned with perpetual snow. The Tamina foams along its ravine bed rifted by a convulsion of nature—in the Grison Alps, and Plessers lends his thermal waters to the cure of many a hopeless malady. The great sea washes the shores of the ever memorable Palestine, & Vesuvius still periodically emits a sulphurous smoke in proud triumph of ruined Pompeii. The native of Samoa reclining upon his mat luxuriates upon the delicious fruits of his Artocarpus, & defies the rich jewels of Golconda. The Hindoo finds a grove in every tree and the Laplander dashes over his glacier country to the speed of his reindeer. "The Lion couches in the tall grass of Africa, and her forests resound with her beasts of prey. The wild-cat and Panther seek their food in the swamps and bays of America and the timid deer hides himself from the red hunter. Myriads of reptiles crawl in the mud of each slimy pool, and countless insects sport upon every sunbeam that gleams from its surface." Surely Plato reasons well, If there be a God above and sure there is, for [all nature acknowledges it.

The study of the natural sciences, while it leads to the promotion of temporal prosperity, likewise improves the heart and elevates the mind. It leads the Soul, "Through nature up to nature's God."

In every age men have been led by the contemplation of nature to admire the wisdom and goodness of the Great Author of the Universe.— And while indulging in these celestial contemplations Poets, Orators, and Philosophers have burst forth in the most enrapturing strains of eloquence respecting the Glory and goodness of the Grand Architect. Nor are the instructions to be derived from the study of nature touching the existence, power and goodness of the Great First cause, confined to any par-

ticular country or class of men, but while these lessons are clearly understood by those who enjoy the light of Revelation, they may be comprehended in some degree by those who are not blessed with such light:—the volume of nature is open to all even to the savage—

———"Whose untutored mind,
Sees God in clouds or hears him in the wind."

But while the study of nature and the natural sciences should lead the mind at every step to admire the wisdom and goodness of the Deity, it also renders us conversant with every thing that is useful and ornamental in civilized society. With reference to Chemistry, one branch of natural science, Prof. Silliman says, "the pupil in this science finds every where innumerable applications of his knowledge to purposes of practical utility, to those of domestic life, to the arts which enrich and adorn society, and to the illustration of the wisdom, power and goodness of that great Being whose pleasure called the physical universe into existence and constantly sustains it in order and beauty." What is true of chemistry is true to a greater or less extent of all the branches of natural science.

There is a profit or pleasure in the highest degree connected with a thorough knowledge of the various productions of the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms. There is pleasure to be derived or profit to be enjoyed from every thing that surrounds us in the whole kingdom of nature. But unless we have studied the sciences to some advantage all the rich store of profit and pleasure connected with them will be lost upon us.

To the soul thoroughly imbued with the principles of natural science, all nature presents a rich and perpetual feast—a banquet to the mind at which it drinks in rivers of pleasure, without becoming cloyed or intoxicated with the large and delicious draughts. Does the man of scientific attainments walk abroad on a May-day over the fields and lawns—blooming & beautiful with a rich variety of flowers? It is not to gaze idly upon the beauties of vegetable nature—to pluck here & there a flower, without knowing whether it contains a poison or a balm—no he looks with an intelligent eye upon the springing grass or the budding flower, and with botanic skill he points out the beauty and utility of the various productions of the vegetable kingdom. Does he clamber along the lofty mountain's brow, or enter the deep caves and caverns with which the world abounds. He is not bewildered with the stupendous scenery of the mountains, nor lost in amazement when he enters the spacious halls, which nature has formed in the bowels of the earth. He is at home amid such scenery, and in every ledge of rocks, in every formation of fossil he beholds something pleasing or instructive. And to the same individual there is a pleasure in beholding the rich and varied plumage of the feathered tribes, or in listening to their matin songs, or in watching the golden pich as it cuts the limpid current in its sportive gambols—a pleasure far more exalted and rational than that which fills the mind of him who can only associate birds and fishes with the gratification or cravings of an epicurean appetite.

All that is practical and all that is pleasing in life, is connected directly or indirectly with this branch of study. In its circle it embraces the Heav-

ens and Earth. Astronomy, Geography, Geology Mineralogy, Ornithology, Chemistry and other branches belong to Physical science, and it is highly gratifying to witness the attention that is now paid to these different branches in all our higher institutions—to hear of the establishment of Lyceums, Museums and the great National Institution at the Capitol City.

But although something has been done in this country to promote the interests of science, yet much, very much, remains to be accomplished. Let then the cause be advanced, let it be the main object in every education, let every one contribute to the general fund his mite of practical information until this branch of knowledge shall be brought to perfection, and every enterprise based and conducted upon established scientific principles—until the *Aëronaut* shall sail in his silken vessel far above the regions of the tempest and storm with as much safety and success, and far more rapidly than the proud steamer glides over the swelling billows of the Ocean—until the Astronomer shall so improve his instruments as to magnify the planets a thousand fold more than can be done at the present day, and shall behold not merely the spots and the supposed elevations and depressions upon the surface of the moon, but shall view with minuteness and accuracy all her diversified and glorious scenery—shall discover with clearness her flowing rivers, her mountain peaks, her “cloud capped towers and gorgeous palaces,” and shall even descry her celestial inhabitants as they move with angelic step upon her silvery surface.

EUPHEMIANS :—You, Gentleman, have combined your associated exertions for the promotion of science and a sound literature. And although but three brief years have had their fleeting rounds since the first anniversary of your society, already does its celebration attract a mingled throng of beauty and intelligence. This is indeed flattering and encouraging—and evidence of the justness of your cause—of the deep interest felt in the welfare of your association, and of the College with which it is connected.

To struggle for knowledge is the noblest struggle in the power of man to make. And if the student be true to himself his efforts are not rewarded like those of the Grecian contestor, or the time serving politician with a crown of fading laurels, or the short lived applause of the vacillating multitude, but the man of true knowledge lives forever. As when some heavy substance breaking upon the stillness of the Ocean’s slumbering water throws it into circular waves which widen out in every direction until they reach the shore or are lost in the distance, so the sphere of the wise and virtuous man’s influence extends with the progress of time—reaches down to distant ages and his name shines brighter and brighter as posterity learns to appreciate his worth.

Suffer no means of improvement to be neglected, nor any delusiveness of hope to depress or dampen your spirits, but be ever active, vigorous, manly and bold. Build all your efforts upon that sure foundation of learning and science, and let your watchword be *onward*. That inimitable author Sir Walter Scott, who in Romance had no superior, and in poetry was smooth and sublime, describing the adventures of Roderick Dhu. or

"Climbing the dark brow of the mighty Melvellen," declared that he "would give one half of the reputation which he had acquired, provided he could rest the other half upon a sound foundation of learning and science.

There is one thing of which you may be well assured,---no matter what may be your situation in after life, whether you bask in the meridian sunbeams of prosperity or sink down amid the ills of affliction and disappointed hope, you will never look back with emotions of regret to the time you may spend in the pursuit of knowledge. But like that conscientious feeling which prompts to the discharge of every duty, and sustains the virtuous soul in adversity, knowledge will buoy up in the midst of the great sea of life in defiance of all opposing winds and currents, and enable you to exclaim in the language of the Poet,

"Though the Ocean roar around me,
It still shall bear me on.
Though a desert should surround me,
It hath springs that may be won."

TO THE GRADUATES :

Gentlemen, Your Collegiate life is now over. Your able President & Professors after conducting you safely through all the fatigueing tho' agreeable windings of a liberal education, now relinquish their superintendence, & commend you to a world which sometimes flatters and fawns, but more often proves cold and uncharitable. You must now bid a long farewell to your "Alma Mater," and at a moment too when she presents brighter and fairer prospects to her sons. But before you leave suffer me in behalf of your flourishing Society to present you with these *Diplomas*, an humble acknowledgement of your standing and merit. Recieve them amid the cheers and approving smiles of an intelligent audience, as *Euphemians* worthy of more honors than *parchment* can confer.

This is indeed in many respects a cold unfeeling world;---For every pure fountain of pleasure there is a wide and deep flowing stream of solicitude. Troubles will rise and foam like billows to overwhelm you---friends will flatter and enemies deride. But amidst all these vicissitudes of life you will find that

"There's nothing so becomes a man,
As modest stillness, and humility:"

be this ever your guide,---if however in attempting to conform to this precept, you should find persecution like a vampire at your hearts, sucking the blood of reputation, tread upon the demon, and let but the voice of a *Euphemian* be raised in his own cause, and Envy and Malice and Slander and green-eyed jealousy with their drawn besoms of destruction will quake like reeds to the storm and fly abashed, to their native *Hell* leaving your characters brighter and purer by every trial.



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